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PSC 366.01: The American Presidency

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
Department of Political Science

PSc 366(W) The American Presidency
Autumn 2000

Dr. Laslovich
Office: LA 354
Hrs: TR 11-12:00, 1-2:00
and by app't (4418)

Course Description

A critical analysis of the American presidency. Since the office lacks a clear constitutional statement of precise power, it is subject to various approaches taken by succeeding presidents, as they attempt to meet heightened expectations of presidential performance. Topics include the political resources of the president, presidential-congressional relations, presidential coalition building, case studies in domestic and foreign policy-making, and an evaluation of presidential performance.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course students should gain an understanding of the extent, and limitations, of presidential power as the office has evolved since WWII. Students will consider the contingent nature of presidential influence vis-à-vis Congress, the judiciary, interest groups, public opinion and the media. As a writing course, participants will develop their analytical skills, including their ability to define a research project, conduct library research, marshal contending arguments, and present their assessments articulately.

Texts

Students are required to read the following texts which are available at the University Bookstore:

- Landy, Marc & Milkis, Sidney M. Presidential Greatness. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2000;
Matusow, Allen J. Nixon's Economy: Booms, Busts, Dollars, and Votes. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1998, and
Pfiffner, James P. The Strategic Presidency: Hitting the Ground Running. 2nd Edition Revised. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1996.

Course Requirements

Students will be evaluated upon the following basis:

Exam 1 (Sept.28) Topic I	20%
Research Paper Proposal (due Sept. 21)	5%
Research Paper I (due Oct. 24)	15%
Exam 2 (Nov. 2) Topics II-IV	20%
Research Paper II (due Nov. 16)	20%
Final Exam (Wed., Dec. 20, 3:20-5:20) Topics V	20%

Drop/Add Deadlines

Sept. 25 - Last day to drop and add classes by Dial Bear.

Oct. 16 - Last day to drop (with no refunds) and add classes and/or change grading option.

Dec. 15 - Last day for drop petitions.

Makeup Exam Policy

Students who are excused from a scheduled exam may write a makeup exam. In fairness to all students, exam absences must be approved by the instructor.

Research Essays

Students are invited to formulate their own research topic. However, topics must be approved by the instructor to ensure proper scope and focus, as well as allow a chance to offer suggestions.

Students must submit a paper proposal by Sept. 21, approximately 3 typed pages in length. The proposal should, in effect, comprise the introduction of the research paper. It should include a clear research statement (i.e., the purpose of the paper), a discussion of the various academic points of view regarding the topic, and a preliminary bibliography listing scholarly sources to be used. The proposal will be returned with comments and suggestions to facilitate completion of the next writing assignment.

Please note that this is to be a research paper. Consequently the amount of research undertaken, and the ability to marshal information effectively, will be crucial in the evaluation of the paper. The submission will also be graded for composition as well as content.

The paper should range between 12 to 15 double-spaced typed pages. Paper I is due Oct. 24 in class. Extensions will be given only in cases of genuine emergency as judged by the instructor. However all late papers will be penalized TWO points per day, including weekends.

Research papers will be critiqued and returned. Research paper II is due Nov. 16 in class. NOTE - at this point late papers will not be accepted.

The Classroom Learning Environment (authored by Dr. Ronald Perrin, Professor of Political Theory)

Wherever the learning process takes place (for example, in the library or the seclusion of one's study) it does so best when there are a minimum of distractions. This requirement poses special challenges for the learning that takes place in the lecture hall or the classroom, where the possibility of distractions is the greatest.

In order to establish and maintain a supportive learning environment for my students I will not tolerate the few individuals who might be prone to

a) come to class late or leave early, b) carry on private conversations during class, c) use the lecture hall/classroom as an opportunity to read material, such as the Kaimin, that is not relevant to the subject matter under consideration.

The Classroom Learning Environment (continued)

The only exception to these conditions concern students whose work schedules or unanticipated appointments require them to arrive for class late or leave early. In these circumstances I would appreciate knowing of the circumstances before it occurs and, in all such instances, request that students do so as unobtrusively as possible. Thank you.

Lecture Topics and Readings

- I Introduction
Sidney and Milkis.
- II Organizing the White House
Pfiffner, chapters 1 and 2.
- III Presidents and the Bureaucracy
Pfiffner, chapters 3 and 4.
- IV Presidential-Congressional Relations
Pfiffner, chapter 6.
- V Transition Case Studies
Pfiffner, chapters 7, 8 and Conclusion.
- VI Nixon: Politics and Economics
Pfiffner, chapter 5.
Matusow.

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